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ABSTRACT

Numerous issues and questions related to the adult, part-time student are addressed in this research review, especially as they pertain to the community college. The paper begins by comparing the demographic characteristics of adult learners and non-learners and then points to several sub-populations which might be better served by the community college, for example, women, the aging, minorities, and blue collar workers. The next sections of the paper consider the educational needs and characteristics of adult learners and present ideas for recruiting and serving these individuals. Subsequent sections provide insight into the issues of: (1) the value of organizational structures, such as internal services, consortia, educational brokerage, and cooperative agreements: (2) the institutional changes needed to meet the needs of adult populations: (3) methods of delivery of services: (4) restructuring financial aid: (5) funding options and budgeting priorities: and (6) the benefits of continuing education for the adult learner. A 103-item bibliography is included. (AYC)

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ADULT PART-TIME LEARNERS IN THE EIGHTIES

by

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ADULT PART TIME LEARNERS IN THE 80's

INTRODUCTION

A quiet revolution is surging across America's two-year campuses. It has been ignored by too many administrators in attempts to keep up with the more pressing problems of inflation and loss of control. However, now is the hour of decision for large numbers of our institutions. No longer can we close our eyes to the realities of changing enrollment patterns. The 1979-1980 college year marks the peak of enrollments of traditional 16-21 year old full time students. From a peak of 4,292,000 18 year olds in 1979, the 18 year old age group will hit a low of 3,168,000 by 1992, a decline of 26%. For the broader 18-24 year old group, the greatest decline is not expected to accellerate until 1982, according to NCES. Studies under way by several federal and regional accrediting agencies indicate that there are variables that make the problem more immediate in northern and midwest communities due to overall population losses to sun belt states. The projected drops in enrollments of full time traditional students need not cast a spell of doom and gloom -- if -- we develop strategies for orderly and positive change on our campuses NOW!

Today, I'd like to discuss what these changes may portend for you and the institution you serve. The adult part time learner is the hope of the future for two-year college survival. Without major institutional changes to improve access and services, the part time populations will not generate the FTE's of $$$ needed to sustain our institutional revenue needs. Without the changes that we propose, it is forseeable that as many as 150 two-year institutions will close by the end of this decade and another 400-500 will be marginal operations.

My projections regarding the future are firmly based on both my research and that of several others who are mentioned throughout this paper. Our office, over the past three and a half years has completed in depth studies reporting on the needs of several sub-populations of adult learners including:

-Entrepreneurs
-Displaced homemakers
-Single parents
-Older women

We have also had the privilege of working in an advisory capacity to the researchers at the National Center for Research in Vocational Education at Ohio State University, the Center for the Development of Two-Year Colleges at Suny Albany, and the American Institutes of Research ongoing study on Compentency Based Post-Secondary Vocational Education, to name a few.

WHO ARE THE POTENTIAL PART TIME LEARNERS OF THE '80's?

DEMOGRAPHICS (See hand-out and transparency chart)

Background:

"Americans in Transition: Life Changes as Reasons for Learning", A report on adult learners that grew out of a survey conducted by FDLS (Future Directions for Learning Society) gives new clues about why adults pursue education. The study, based on a nation wide representative sample of more than 1,500 adults, supports the proposition that life changes are the reasons we learn.

The findings suggest that in the past year, half of all Americans 25 years old and older learned something either formally or informally. For example, teaching themselves about home maintenence, insurance, or religion, or studying in adult education classes and college courses, or taking training provided by employers. Among the learners, 83% described some past or future change in their lives as a reason for them to learn. More than half said they were triggered to begin learning activities when they did because of some event in their career lives -- a promotion, a new job, a company relocation. 16% of the respondents said they were learning to cope with family transitions, 35% named triggers in their family lives -- divorce, increase in income, moving to a new location -- as motivating them to learn when they did.

As examination of the demographic differences between learners and non-learners among the survey respondents showed that they were far more alike than different. Among the small differences are the following:

- Learners are slightly more likely to live in urban areas and are considerably younger than non-learners.
- Blacks make up considerably less than their proportionate share of learners, hispanics make up their share, white make up a bit more than their share, other groups make up considerably more than their share.
- Adult learners have considerably more previous education than do non-learners, and adults with high incomes are more likely to engage in life-long learning activities.
- Employed adults are far more likely to engage in study than unemployed adults. Of all occupational groups, adults engaged in professional and technical work are most likely to pursue education, those in farm work are least likely. [1] Adults employed in business and professional fields are more likely to engage in learning than those employed in agriculture, mining, construction, and transportation.

1. Unless a major off campus targeted outreach is developed with area agricultural organizations.

- Participation in learning activities drops sharply among adults who have five or more children. Women with children under the age of 18 are considerably more likely to engage in learning than women with children over 18.

- Adults in the Pacific Coast states are more likely to engage in learning activities than those in any other region of the nation, adults in the South Atlantic states are less likely than in any other region.

- Single adults who have never married and divorced adults are more likely to engage in learning activities than others, widowed adults are less likely.

These new adult students are already having a profound impact on two-year colleges. They are different from traditional students. They often have a specific career objective. They are usually highly motivated. They want retraining, certification, licensing. And many are arriving on campus with college-level knowledge acquired in non-traditional ways such as Credit for Life Experience, (CLEP) OJT, etc.

WHAT DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS MIGHT WE BETTER SERVE?

Some administrators tend to neglect the more disadvantaged adult sub-populations and need to be re-sensitized:

> "Assisting the disadvantaged is somewhat out of favor these days, but the job remains undone. Responsibility extends to all of higher education. Adult education, though has special obligations because of its second-chance tradition and its problem-solving side. It is hoped, therefore, that there will be a stepping up, not a stepping down, of adult education programs to benefit women, the aging, the handicapped, and blacks and other racial and ethnic minorities..."
> (Harrington, 1977, p. 216)

Harrington's comments offer a very general and traditional list of disadvantaged adult learner categories: women, the aging, the handicapped, blacks, other minorities, etc. With the notable exception of the handicapped, these categories are of the kind adult educators frequently think of as already utilizing their programs. As Harrington points out, adult centered programs in post-secondary institutions requently neglect these categories of adults which he identifies as the more disadvantaged groups. Because the mode in which a target population is viewed can have a major impact upon how programs develop it is appropriate to assume that different labels for sub-populations may promote renewed interest, impetus, and involvement.

Herbert A. Levine, in a recent policy-related paper, picks out a different, interesting and uncommon category of educationally disadvantaged adults.

> The largest group of Americans so far deprived of their educational birthright are adult workers. Blue collar workers, women, and minority groups have been especially deprived. Thus, as one plans for educational policy and strategies for the late 1970's and 80's, it seems highly appropriate to assert some priority of effort and expenditure to the educational needs of these workers and their families.
> (Levine and Fried, 1978, p. 12)

Less advantaged adults are underrepresented in the process of program development for part time learners. As a result, solutions tend to neglect the interests of the less advantaged, and they lose the direct benefits of participation. Some programs have sought to broaden the base of citizen involvement in community problem solving. For more than a decade federal funds from Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965 have supported continuing education activities focused on community problem solving. State guidelines tend to emphasize collaboration by higher education institutions and community groups. Some voluntary associations have tried to include less advantaged adults in community-based learning projects. (Urban League, National Congress of Neighborhood Women, Etc., in cooperation with community colleges).

National policy and planning activities can contribute in several ways to increasing the involvement of less advantaged adults in learning activities.

THE NEEDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT LEARNERS

K. Patricia Cross notes in the introduction of The Missing Link: Connecting Adult Learners to Learning Resources , [1] "It is quite possible that lifelong learning now outranks motherhood, apple pie, and the flag as a universal good." In her eighty page report prepared for Future Directions for a Learning Society (FDLS), the College Board project that focuses on providing access and transition to educational programs for adult learners, Dr. Cross recommends ways to link learner's needs and learning resources. Among her findings are the following:

- Educational attainment is the single most important predictor of an adult's participation in further education. Education is addictive; the more people have, the more they want and the more they participate.

1. K. Patricia Cross, The Missing Link: Connecting Adult Learners to Learning Resources. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1978, 80 pages.

- In general, the data from state and national surveys show that on socio-economic indicators, learners are most similar to today's college students and non-learners least similar. People who state that they are interested in pursuing learning are statistically more like the average American than either learners or non-learners. Non-learners come primarily from the ranks of the elderly and lower socio-economic classes.

- The cost of education appears consistently in the data as a major barrier for people with little previous education who would like to participate in learning activities.

- Adults are usually unable to devote full time to studying because of jobs and other adult responsibilities. The major needs are for equity in services and fees for part time students and for learning schedules that do not conflict with other adult commitments.

- Adults have had more varied experiences than have young people, and their backgrounds are more diverse. The implication is that placement and credit must be considered on an individual basis for adult learners.

- Many adults have been out of "school" for some years. Schools and other adult learning opportunities have changed, and adults themselves have changed, necessitating a re-orientation to learning and to changed images of adult education.

Part time and short-term education needed by adults includes work-related learning as well as those that are not work-related. More than half of adult participation in learning activities is not work-related (Johnstone and Rivera, 1965; Tough, 1978). One of four categories of continuing education cited by Liveright (1968) was occupational, the other three were family, civic, and personal.

Thus nonwork-related learning activities by adults exclude educative activity for which the main purpose is improvement of occupational performance. By contrast, this statement deals with educative activity related to other adult life roles, such as citizen organization and church member, user of leisure, family member, and consumer (Havighurst and Orr 1956). In the future personal development and selfhood that spans all life roles, including that of parent, and citizen as well as worker. Most nonwork-related learning by adults is self-directed and provided by other educational institutions, labor unions, and employers. However, some of the most provocative instances of nonwork-related learning activities by adults have been conducted by community colleges; examples include humanities studies, drug education, liberal education for adult

executives, adult basic education, and community resource development co-sponsored with the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service.

HOW WILL WE RECRUIT THESE POPULATIONS?

Below are some ideas and models for institutions wishing to serve the growing adult market and ways to move from a reactive to a pro-active plan for outreach. Communications ranging from policy statements, to posters, to new articles are shown in the following pages to give you models to follow. In addition to these samples, the College Board's publication, 350 Ways Colleges are Serving the Adult Learners,[2] will give you a potpourri of ideas that you may want to adapt to your own institution.

- For older adults, offer a day of "sample classes" with box lunches available for a small fee, and exibits. Provide counselors to advise and encourage them to register for courses, workshops, etc.

- Sponsor "Information Nights". Invite community leaders to a dinner once a year, describe your programs, and ask what courses they would like added to the curriculum.

- Send a mailing to the 10 postal zones closest to your institution, keying the mailing to keep track responses by zone. Then check census data: to see why the response is especially high or low in a particular zone; to decide whether to drop the mailing in that zone; or to develop a new marketing strategy.

- Determine which radio spots your various student populations listen to and place spot advertisements that describe offerings of interest to them. Example: Linn Bentor, CC of Oregon, recruited 125 with one.

- Offer to provide a local newspaper with a weekly column on the educational offerings available in your community and to answer readers' pertinent questions. Joyce Lain Kennedy's syndicated CAREERS Column appears in 375 suburban papers. Arrange a localized tie in.

- Advertise a toll-free Wide Area Telephone Service (WATS) line and hire someone with a friendly voice to advise callers about courses and how to plan their programs. Add an answering machine for 24 hr service.

- Set up display racks of descriptive materials in office buildings and factories and other places where people work.

- Colored cards printed with catchy phrases ("Looking for an occupation?", "Want a Job But Don't Know Where to Look?", "Need Retraining?") and followed by a phone number at the college. Cards would be distributed in public places like supermarkets, laundromats, shopping centers, or the local AFDC office.

- Mass mailings of informational flyers piggy-backed with local utility bills.

- An answering service for night hours on the college switchboard.

- Rip-off, mail-back postcards on bulletin boards in public places.

- Vocational and aptitude testing services offered to the public.

- Information on programs of the college should be sent out to AFDC case workers.

- An adult re-entry center which includes college and community resource representatives should be started. A one-stop adult services center (testing -- GED, CLEP -- department tests and CAEL, CETA, AFDC, vocational rehabilitation, mental health).

- Rural women can be recruited through grange personnel and county extension agents.

- Hold a Career Changers Fair - people working in various non-traditional careers could be available to talk with community men and women about these careers. (WCTI ran a career changing day for teachers - over 150 registered)

All of the above-listed awareness activities can be adopted partly or in total in order to start the career awareness process for adults. Some of the activities mentioned involve the exploration and decision making phases of career education as well. Since it is an evolving, developmental and dynamic process, it is to be expected that adult women will be engaging in various phases simultaneously.

2. College Entrance Examination Board, 350 Ways Colleges Are Serving Adult Learners. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1979, 47 pages.

A word of caution must be given regarding the length of time which will elapse between the awareness phase and the vocational preparation phase. Many adults recruited as students through the awareness activities mentioned here will never enter non-traditional vocational programs. That is largely because both their own self-concepts and society's standards for acceptable sex-role behavior will change slowly. However, colleges will recruit more students through these efforts alone, and more adults will enter occupational training as a result of some of the exploration activities and models described in the next section.

- Identify community-based groups that provide counseling but who are not "labeled" counselors. Invite groups to campus such as clergy, attorneys, judges, union shop stewards, personnel directors, etc. Provide student-led campus tours, develop dialogues and set schedules for follow-up planning sessions.

- Use cable TV spots to "tease" potential learners about upcoming TV courses or programs.

    - Noontime "Dialing for Dollars" attracts senior citizens and housewives.

    - Farm market reports at 5:15 and 6:15 AM stimulate calls from farm families in rural areas.

    - In San Antonio, Texas the "Good Morning San Antonio" show on at 6:15 AM is utilized to announce continuing education opportunities for office workers and career changers.

    - 375 calls were logged by Trident CC in South Carolina after they prepared a trigger film and talk show appearance to suggest that free counseling was available for those seeking better paying jobs.

TARGETED MARKETING PAYS OFF!

One college developed a College at Home program of individual instruction packages for the homebound, shift workers and mothers of pre-schoolers. It was marketed through flyers distributed by area convenience stores with sales of $1.00 or more.

ISSUES AND INSIGHTS:

HOW WILL WE ORGANIZE TO SERVE THESE LEARNERS?

Organizational structure will in part depend upon which sub-populations are to be served and how learning services are to be delivered. However, several specific modes are worth exploring.

Internal Services utilizing "sensitized staff" and a revised policy and practices statement of mission. This mode might be utilized to serve adults who attend a block scheduled daytime component called Thursday College (Ex: Lakeland College, Mottoon, Ill.) or Super Saturdays for the Family (Ex: Lehigh County CC, PA).

Consortia take many forms to meet localized needs. Two modes that have successfully served diverse populations include the Western Maryland Consortia that includes two four-year institutions and three two-year colleges. The consortia has provided leadership for staff development, grantsmanship including staff development to serve new populations, and outreach. Grand Rapids Jr. College participates in a counseling program for adult women that involves four four-year colleges, the YWCA and the Jr. College. It offers a variety of short term training as well.

Educational Brokering has been a successful way to "barter" with other organizations or industries for students.Charles Branch, President of Chattanooga State Technical Community College, Chattanooga, Tennessee, said a sheet metal workers local union asked his college to train quite a few of its members in welding. "We didn't teach welding", said Branch, "But we had the responsiblity of helping working people. We went out and found a good facility and now we are hunting for a good teacher. A college can also act as an educational broker."

In some metropolitan areas it is possible with on-line telephone access registration for an individual to register for courses at five different institutions or components with a single telephone call. Payment is arranged through VISA or Master Charge.

Short-Term Limited Cooperative Agreements. To overcome "In House" blockages short-term agreements with individual companies, union, and/or agencies such as CETA manpower counsils or Area Agencies on Aging programs are being contracted to reach new or emerging community-based needs.

ISSUE:

WHAT INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES NEED TO BE MADE TO BETTER SERVE ADULT PART-TIME LEARNERS?

- One-stop admission and intake service with "jet speed" registration.

- Stop "bullpen" registration lines. Time is money to adults. They will walk away rather than wait.

- Restructure outreach to deliver career counseling to the community.

- Improve financial aid options for single course and non-credit programs and workshops.

- Retrain personnel to be sensitive to the needs of adult part time learners. Key components of a re-training plan must include both professional and classified "gatekeepers" who might otherwise try to continue to better support service delivery appropriate to traditional age full time students. Examples of "Gatekeepers" range from ;

  - -Registrars who sometimes scorn CLEP, and credit for experiential learning.

  - -The secretary who puts an employed potential student on "hold" for more than 5 minutes.

  - -Occupational program directors who only schedule interviews from 9-12

- Instructional personnel retraining needs to center on two basic topics:

  - -Adult learning styles
  - -Classroom management or individualized learning styles for part time learners.

Perhaps the largest group of staff to be "re-sensitized" to the needs of adult part timers are counselors and admissions staff. This reorientation effort will necessarily include both re-training and re-organization. No longer will institutions be able to support or condone a distribution of staff in a mode that provides 90% of services between 8:30 - 4:30 daily with 9% after 4:30 PM weekdays, and less than 1% available on weekends.

ISSUES AND INSIGHTS:

WHERE WILL WE DELIVER THESE SERVICES AND INSTRUCTIONAL PACKAGES?

A rapidly changing economy, increased staff and energy costs point to the need for "brainstorming" to strengthen existing low cost fuel efficient modes of delivery. Among the obvious modes to be strengthened are:

- Radio
- TV - Both commercial and cable as well as public
- College at home individualized learning packages.
- Work site job and recreational tie-ins that include released time for skill upgrading, career planning and before or after work leisure training activities.

- Cooperative ventures co-sponsored with churches, unions, lodges to tie into existing meetings, programs, etc. So called community-based "Weekend Colleges" are a common example.
- Video cassette modules to take home. Check out fee that would include testing and reading materials.
- More use of block scheduling at alternative time patterns both days and evenings.
- Greater use of delivery of faculty to community-based sites.

Emerging instructional modes for the part time learner include:

1. Increased utilization of work of home-based word processors or mini or micro computers. The 900 Radio Shack stores now have micro computers for sale or lease with appropriate learning packages. The cost of their mini's is under $4,000. Some colleges are already developing mini computer literacy packages to serve this market.

2. Telephone access is being given a big boost by communications companies. It is expected that federal agencies will include two-year colleges in several statewide networks in fiscal year 1981 to upgrade the skills of nursing and allied health personnel.

3. Courses by newspapers with on campus forums have been given some new twists that appear to offer the fuel conscious part time learner new options.

4. Community libraries are making a concerted effort to revitalize cooperative ventures with our institutions. One state has even installed computer terminals tied to centralized instructional and career exploration programming.

ISSUES AND INSIGHTS:

HOW WILL WE RESTRUCTURE FINANCIAL AID TO BETTER SERVE ADULT PART TIME LEARNERS?

Two-year college experience with the more than 2 million females who have surged on to our campuses each of the last several years offer some insights:

1. Adult learners need financial packages to meet individual needs. Solutions and strategies to be explored include:

A. Revolving loan funds supported by community-based groups such as:
   -Chambers of Commerce
   -Unions
   -Clubs
   -Churches
   -Business and Industry
   -Local foundations

B. Adoption of a family education savings plan in cooperation with area industries. One such well structured plan has been developed by Kimberly Clark Corp. (1975a) At the beginning of each year, the company places 25 percent of an employee's Kim Ed allotment in a family education savings account. The employee may save an additional $200 per year in that account, which Kimberly Clark will match at the rate of 20%. These funds may be used for the post-secondary education activities of the employee or members of his or her immediate family.

C. The local 1100 of the retail, wholesale and department store workers union's contract with New York hospitals which provided for the contribution of 1% of employee gross earnings to a special fund to pay workers to train for better jobs. In 1969, this totaled approximately $1 million in educational funds. For non-credentialed workers in entry-level positions, the contract meant training for upgrading into credentialed positions. And for those already in credentialed positions, it offered release time for further upgrading. (Levine, 1972).

ISSUES AND INSIGHTS:

HOW WILL INSTITUTIONS FIND THE PART TIME LEARNER?

This $64.00 question has no pat answers in states such as Massachusetts and Connecticut where the legislatives have mandated caps on full time enrollments while continuing to deny state subsidies for part time learner activities. While local administrators in those states creatively orchestrate staff and management funds from "soft" sources and high tuition rates, skilled administrators elsewhere should be moving to assure community-based political support for changing local and state funding formulas to facilitate the projected enrollment changes.

Among options being explored are:

1. Legislative funds to follow the individual's class registrations rather than program registrations for occupationally related instructional reimbursement.

2. State and federal subsidies for economic development retraining to cope with technology change; labor market retooling, etc.

3. Renewed partnerships between local manpower councils, and/or governor's discretionary funding panels and two-year colleges to better serve the economically disadvantaged.

4. Reauthorization of vocational education ammendments in 1981 to include targeted funds for two-year institutions to address the "reindustrialization" of the American economy in the '80's. Under this strategy funds for adult part time learners and out of school/out of work youth would be designated as priority categories.

5. Increased utilization of Title XX Social Security funds and commission of aging Title IV funds to serve the needs of older Americans.

6. Restructuring of Title I Higher Education Act funds to offer institutional matching funds for outreach program training.

Last, but perhaps most important is the need to reassess institutional budget priorities. Salaries and benefits to full time staff and faculty account for as much as 70% of operating budgets nationwide. Before the crisis hits your campus, perhaps you will want to explore a series of re-staffing options to better balance the ratio of administrative staff and full time faculty to meet the needs of part timers. Among options being utilized are efforts to shift or reduce the number of persons in labor intensive areas.

1. Installation of on-line computer services for registration.

2. Substitution of centralized word processing pool for dept./division and administrative clerical positions.

3. Utilization of key faculty in non-classroom settings:
   Example: English/Humanities faculty or reduced teaching loads to:

   a) Do outreach
   b) Faculty advisement
   c) Grantsmanship

   Example: Utilize strategic budget planning to determine which support services such as food service, bookstore, security can be trimmed and/or contracted out more profitably.

4. Reduce by attrition all non-tenured support staff administrative and classified by 40%.

5. Offer senior faculty and administrators in their 60's early retirement options.

6. Freeze access to tenure and promotion for 3 years while studying options for instituting term contracts vs. tenure.

Develop a major marketing strategy to attract long-term contracts for educational services with

1. Military installations
2. Growth industries
3. Other human service or governmental agencies

Some forward looking colleges generate as much as 40% of operating needs from these options. To strengthen this effort sometimes requires contracting through the college's foundation.

ISSUE:

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS WE SHOULD OFFER THE ADULT PART TIME LEARNER?

It is important to distinguish between societal and individual benefits of continuing education and to emphasize their interdependence (Blakely and Lappin, 1969; Sell, 1978). Part time educational participation, especially learning activity that is nonwork-related is typically considered in terms of individual benefits. Illustrative individual benefits include learning to read, how to learn, developing personal values, improving self-esteem, recreational and aesthetic experiences, and assuming public responsiblity. Individual benefits have corresponding societal benefits, such as groups and communities of informal adults who are growing in proficiency, independent of institutions, culturally aware, humane, and responsible. A nurse past the age of 40 may be ready to make some sort of career shift into an administrative role. As a result, in the context of professional education, it is important to recognize that educational reasons for participation and educational programs can come in two basic forms: technical and non-technical. Technical education includes those concerns which are more related to the continuous career development situation. Non-technical education includes those concerns of professionals that are related to other personal development needs.

It has been a pleasure to be here and I hope that as your institution explores its options for the 1980's that you will lead the way toward increasing educational equity for all adults through strategic planning that is pro-active. We must awaken the sleeping giants that all too many of our campuses have become. "Leadership by default" will not be the appropriate management style for the "post bricks and mortar" era administration to survive. The successful administrator of the '80's will be one who is flexible but decisive. He/she must be prepared to enter the list of "Community-based marketing and practical advocacy politics at the local, state and federal levels.

If I can be of assistance to you, your board or staff in developing comprehensive strategic plans for change, please feel free to contact

me at the Association. We will be glad to share our resources in the realms of staff and program development, planning and evaluation.

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